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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/827,078

04/19/2004

Brandon M. Beck

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EXAMINER

SAXENA, AKASH

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2128

DATE MAILED: 07/05/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/827,078	<b>Applicant(s)</b> BECK ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Akash Saxena	<b>Art Unit</b> 2128	

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --**

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 April 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some    \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-4 have been presented for examination based on the application filed on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2004.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

2. **Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.**

#### Regarding Claim 1-4

Claims 1-4 recite a abstract idea of combining two models (DAG) which specification describes as represented by Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAG) (Specification: (110, Fig.2). Combining DAG is a mathematical concept. Binary decision diagram (BDD) is a form of DAG and a paper showing the combining BDD<sup>1</sup> is included as prior art.

Claims 1-4 do not claim any practical application of the combination.

**Section 2106 [R-2] (Patentable Subject Matter - Computer-Related Inventions) of the MPEP recites the following:**

*If the "acts" of a claimed process manipulate only numbers, abstract concepts or ideas, or signals representing any of the foregoing, the acts are not being applied to appropriate subject matter. Schrader, 22 F.3d at 294-95, 30 USPQ2d at 1458-59. Thus, a process consisting solely of mathematical operations, i.e., converting one set of numbers into another set of numbers, does not manipulate appropriate subject matter and thus cannot constitute a statutory process.*

*"In practical terms, claims define nonstatutory processes if they: consist solely of mathematical operations without some claimed practical application (i.e., executing a "mathematical algorithm"); or - simply manipulate abstract ideas, e.g., a bid (Schrader, 22 F.3d at 293-94, 30 USPQ2d at 1458-59) or a bubble hierarchy (Warmerdam, 33 F.3d at 1360, 31USPQ2d at 1759), without some claimed practical application."*

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<sup>1</sup> Symbolic Model Checking An approach to the state explosion problem; Kenneth L. McMillan, May 1992, Pg. 41-44

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. As described through these claims, the claimed invention does not physically transform an article or physical object to a different state or thing, so to be eligible for patent protection, the claimed invention as a whole must accomplish a practical application. That is, it must produce a useful, concrete and tangible result." State Street, 149 F.3d at 1373-74, 47 USPQ2nd at 160102. The purpose of this requirement is to limit patent protection to inventions that possess a certain level of "real world" value, as opposed to subject matter that represents nothing more than an idea or concept.

Further, claims 1-4 do not seem to produce a tangible result. The tangible requirement of State Street decision requires that the claims must recite at least one 35 USC 101 judicial exception, in that the process claim must set forth a practical application of the 35 USC 101 judicial exception. Benson, 409 U.S. at 71-72, 175 USPQ at 676-77 (invention ineligible because had "no substantial practical application.").

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112¶1<sup>st</sup>***

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

- 3. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is not supported by either a specific asserted utility or a well established utility.**

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The claimed invention is an abstract idea as explained in the 35 USC 101 claim rejection above. There may be a specific and substantial utility present in the specification, however it is not claimed.

Claims 1-4 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. Specifically, since the claimed invention is not supported by either a -specific and substantial-- asserted utility or a well established utility for the reasons set forth above, one skilled in the art clearly would not know how to use the claimed invention.

4. **Further, Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph because current case law (and accordingly, the MPEP) require such a rejection if a §101 rejection is given because when Applicant has not in fact disclosed the practical application for the invention, as a matter of law there is no way Applicant could have disclosed how to practice the undisclosed practical application. This is how the MPEP puts it:**

**(“The how to use prong of section 112 incorporates as a matter of law the requirement of 35 U.S.C. §101 that the specification disclose as a matter of fact a practical utility for the invention.... If the application fails as a matter of fact to satisfy 35 U.S.C. §101, then the application also fails as a matter of law to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to use the invention under 35 U.S.C. §112.”) In re Kirk, 376 F.2d 936, 942, 153 USPQ 48, 53 (CCPA 1967) (“Necessarily, compliance with § 112 requires a description of how to use presently useful inventions, **otherwise an applicant would anomalously be required to teach how to use a useless invention.**”) See, MPEP 2107.01(IV), quoting In re Kirk (emphasis added).**

Therefore, claims 1-4 are rejected on this basis.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112<sup>nd</sup>***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

- 5. Claim 1-4 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.**

**Regarding Claim 1-4**

Claim 1 discloses the limitation in preamble “rules having a constraint that references a non-ancestral family to the constraint” which can be interpreted two different ways. Non-ancestral family could be child node (not the ancestor), or another interpretation could be a completely non-related family (e.g. low suspension in car needs bucket seats in a car, where the bucket seats and suspension nodes are not related). Examiner therefore requests a specific definition for the term “non-ancestral family” and its supported in the specification.

For the reasons mentioned above the claim 1 is indefinite. Claim 2 does not remedy this deficiency and claims 3 & 4 recite the same in preamble, and therefore are rejected likewise.

Further, no patentable weight is given to the limitation presented in the preamble started from the letter wherein as it bears no consequence on the steps of the method. Further, the implied limitation “non-cyclic chain of dependencies among the families and features of the families” is a definition for the directed acyclic graphs (DAG) and is well known in the art.

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If the first interpretation for “non-ancestral family” is taken then each node in the DAG references its “non-ancestral” child node in a rule to decide which child node to select.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

**6. Claim 1-4 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0165701 by Lichtenberg et al (Lichtenberg hereafter).**

Regarding Claim 1

Lichtenberg teaches a method of consolidating multiple models in to a single consolidated model that maintains the non-cyclic dependencies (being a directed acyclic graph) among the families and feature of the families (described as component & associated rules) (Lichtenberg: [0076][0094][0062], Fig.1).

Regarding Claim 2

Lichtenberg teaches detecting any inconsistencies between rules included in the consolidated model (Lichtenberg: [0090]-[0094] – non-compatible products) and attempting to resolve any detected inconsistencies by not allowing the user to select a inconsistent solution (Lichtenberg: [0096]-[0108]).

Regarding Claim 3-4

Limitations presented in claims 3-4 are similar to limitations presented in claim 1 and rejected likewise. Lichtenberg teaches a system (Lichtenberg: [0043]) and a computer program (Lichtenberg: Fig. 2-3, [0272]) for implementing the method of claim 1.



***Relevant References***

7. "The Combining the DAG: A technique for parallel Data Flow Analysis" by Robert Kramer et al teaches ways to remove the cyclic dependencies involved in combining the DAG. Examiner believes that is the one of the inventive concepts in the instant application, which is taught in this paper. (IEEE1994).

***Conclusion***

8. All claims are rejected.
9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.
10. **Examiner's Note:** Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references applied to the claims above for the convenience of the applicant.

Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings of the art and are applied to specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant in preparing responses, to fully consider the references in their entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

In the case of amending the claimed invention, Applicant is respectfully requested to indicate the portion(s) of the specification which dictate(s) the structure relied on for proper interpretation and also to verify and ascertain the metes and bounds of the claimed invention.

***Communication***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Akash Saxena whose telephone number is (571) 272-8351. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30 - 6:00 PM M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kamini S. Shah can be reached on (571)272-2279. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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Friday, June 23, 2006

  
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